

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 009335

SIPDIS

RHONDA SHORE AND ED SALAZAR FOR NCTC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT: 2005 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

REF: STATE 193439

Egypt

1. Egypt is an ally in the Global War on Terrorism. The Egyptian and U.S. Governments maintained close cooperation on a broad range of counterterrorism and law enforcement issues in 2005 and exchanged information on a variety of terrorism, security, and law enforcement matters during the course of the year. An interagency U.S. delegation met with the Egyptian Government's inter-ministerial counterterrorism committee in January.

2. In the past three years, Egypt has tightened its assets-freezing regime in keeping with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. Egypt passed strong anti-money laundering legislation in 2002 and established a financial intelligence unit in 2003. Egypt maintained its strengthened airport security measures and security for the Suez Canal, and continued to institute more stringent port security measures.

3. Egypt was a victim of domestic terrorism in 2005. In April, there were three unsophisticated attacks on crowded tourist destinations in Cairo. On April 7, a lone suicide bomber killed three foreigners, including an American, at the Khan el-Khalili market. Several Americans were seriously injured in this incident. Two related attacks at the end of the month targeting tourists near the Citadel and the Egyptian Museum were thwarted by Egyptian authorities. The only deaths in these two attacks were the perpetrators themselves, whom the government described as the remainder of the small terrorist cell responsible for the April 7 bombing.

4. On July 23, 2005, three bombs exploded in Sharm El Sheikh, at the tip of the Sinai Peninsula, killing 67, including one American, and injuring hundreds of Egyptians and some foreign tourists. One vehicle penetrated the driveway security of a hotel and detonated in the lobby area. Another car bomb exploded on a street in the old section of Sharm El Sheikh. The third bomb was in a bag that exploded in a pedestrian area frequented by tourists. There is no indication that these attacks were directed at Americans, but they are widely regarded as targeting the Egyptian tourist industry.

5. On August 15, in the vicinity of the Rafah border crossing into the Gaza Strip, a small, improvised explosive device detonated near a Multinational Force and Observers vehicle, causing minor injuries to its occupants. The day before, Egyptian authorities discovered a one-ton cache of explosives in El Arish, on the Mediterranean coast of the Sinai. In addition, on August 13 an intercity bus was shot at along a road traversing the Sinai.

6. Between August and late November 2005, the Egyptian Government conducted an intensive security operation in Jebel Helal, a remote region in northeast Sinai, in pursuit of fugitives from a Salafist-Bedouin group suspected of links to the terrorist incidents cited in paragraphs four and five, and to other crimes. During the course of the operation, several Egyptian security personnel, including two high-ranking police officers were killed in a late August ambush. In subsequent skirmishes, in late September and again in late November, several of the fugitives were shot and killed, including Salim Khadr Al-Shanoub and Khalid Mua'id, whom the government identified as key planners of the July 2005 Sharm el-Sheikh attacks, as well as an incident in Taba the year before.

7. In the 2004 incident, a multi-storey tourist hotel in Taba and two rustic seaside camps near Nuweiba by the Israeli border were attacked by vehicular bombs. Thirty-four people died, including one U.S. citizen. The Egyptian Government maintained that all of the terrorist incidents which occurred in 2004-5 were conducted by small domestic groups. There is no information linking these incidents to al Qaida or other international terror networks.

8. The Egyptian judicial system does not allow plea bargaining, and terrorists have historically been prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Terrorism defendants may be tried in military tribunals or emergency courts.

19. During his campaign for the September 7 Presidential elections, President Mubarak called for new anti-terrorism legislation to replace the decades-old Emergency Law, emphasizing that constitutional and legislative reforms would be needed to eliminate terrorism. In explaining his proposal, Mubarak said "the time has come to create a decisive mechanism to fight terrorism." While defending the use of the Emergency Law to respond to "the tragic circumstances" of the past, he said that the time had come to follow the example of other countries that had recently passed comprehensive laws to combat terrorism.

110. Embassy Point of Contact: Embassy Officers Ian McCary, [mccaryij@state.gov](mailto:mccaryij@state.gov), or Michael Roth at [rothmr@state.gov](mailto:rothmr@state.gov).

JONES